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SIPDIS

ABU DHABI FOR MEPI OFFICE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KMPI](#) [KDEM](#) [XF](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC REFORM MEPI STRATEGY FOR QATAR

¶1. Post has developed a three-pronged approach to advance the GOQ's democratic reform agenda. Our planning revolves around Qatar's first national legislative elections, expected to take place in 2006. Post sees the following as primary objectives of the MEPI partnership: promoting open political competition; developing civic awareness; and furthering the rule of law.

¶2. Qatar has proceeded at a steady if not rapid pace toward building democratic institutions since the current Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, took power in 1996. At that time, the establishment of democratic governance was among his top national objectives. Since then, Qatar has held two municipal elections with full women's participation, and has promulgated a new constitution that establishes a two-thirds elected legislative body. These steps, in the Qatari view, place Qatar in the vanguard of Arab political reform. It is important for MEPI to bolster this reform effort as much as possible, respecting Qatar's vision and being careful not to dominate the reform discourse. Thus, our strategy is based on mirroring Qatari "milestones" wherever possible, filling in with U.S. technical and programmatic assistance to strengthen the reform foundation.

¶3. Open Political Competition.

Desired Outcomes: Increased government responsiveness to citizens. Development of an elections law. Increased level of awareness about voter rights and responsibilities. Candidates trained to promoting issues tied to constituents' interests. Qatar has technical expertise to undertake a successful election.

2005 Baseline: The appointed Advisory Council holds its final session in June. The new constitution comes into force in June. Elections forecast for first quarter 2006. No elections law. GOQ drafting regulations on who is a citizen and eligibility for voting. MEPI has completed campaign training session for Gulf women. Qatari election official undertook study tour of U.S. during presidential election. Elections Committee prepares and begin various training programs.

Milestones:

- GOQ agrees to work with IRI on election issues and authorizes its presence in Doha.
- Central Municipal Council (CMC) consolidates elections "lessons learned" for use in legislative election planning.
- Qatar adopts a transparent elections law.
- Qatars with differing political views and women announce their candidacies for the National Assembly.

Tactics:

- Post suggests NGOs for organizing training to the Elections Committee; Elections Committee to select and engage a contractor on its own. (No cost)
- Post and MEPI request GOQ to make a decision on working with IRI. If IRI is not acceptable, MEPI proposes an alternative. (No cost)
- IRI performs constituent survey for CMC. (Already budgeted)
- Two members of National Assembly participate in study mission to the U.S. (Already budgeted)
- Experts on elections law visit Qatar to discuss assistance. (\$30,000)
- MEPI sponsors skills-building training seminar for NGOs. (\$30,000)
- NGO directors attend skills- building workshop designed by the Embassy. (\$1,000)
- "Building Effective Organizations" workshops by IRI. (budgeted)
- Workshops for NGOs in engaging citizens and government (One trainer, one translator, three days - \$15,000)
- Study Mission to the U.S. for members of the Central

Municipal Council. (Budgeted)

-Campaign management training in cooperation with the Permanent Elections Committee. (Budgeted)

14. Civic Education. Educated citizens are crucial to the functioning of a democracy. If a trajectory of programs in civic education is pursued over three to four years, a foundation for democratic reform will be laid. After four years, the educational institutions and NGOs should be able to continue with these programs on their own. If the training programs for journalists, NGOs, and teachers are implemented before the next elections, it may be possible to see a direct impact on citizen participation and coverage of the elections.

Outcome: Active participation of citizens in democratic processes: running for public office, voting in elections, serving on volunteer or elected bodies, abiding by local laws, respect and tolerance for others.

Baseline: No civic education in schools. Poor turnout for last municipal election. Few independent NGOs. Few articles in local media regarding citizen responsibility and participation in democratic system.

Milestones:

- Several candidates running for each position in next election
- More than 50% elector turnout in National Assembly elections
- Constituent-focused articles on Municipal Council appear in press
- Newspapers cover activities and effectiveness of local NGOs
- Schools adopt some auxiliary teaching materials on civic education
- Establishment of student structures (government, clubs) at Qatar University

Tactics and costs:

- Bring trainers from Center for Civic Education in Los Angeles, or a similar institution, to train teachers and public school administrators in incorporating civic education into public school curriculum. (two one-week workshops with two trainers, translator, materials, etc., \$60,000)
- Send teachers and administrators to regional civic education forums (10 teachers to one regional forum for 4 days - \$20,000)
- Provide examples of civic education materials (materials package for 500 teachers - \$50,000)
- Send teachers and administrators to the U.S. to observe civic education in action (five teachers for three week program - \$50,000)
- Workshops for journalists on role of media in covering elections, and education public regarding laws and rights (one workshop, three days, one trainer, one translator - \$15,000)
- Training for university teachers in civic education (Workshop for three days, two trainers - \$30,000)
- Seminar on leadership and community participation at Qatar University (\$15,000)
- Consultant to work with Ministry or Supreme council for Education on civic education (one consultant, for one month - \$30,000)

15. Promoting the rule of law. Broadening and deepening Qatar's democratic reforms and legal institutions will reinforce a stable and vibrant economic and regional partnership. Greater respect for democratic values, human rights, the rule of law will facilitate progress toward participatory democracy.

Desired Outcome: An acceptance and culture of rule of law and good governance; increasingly free and independent judiciaries; greater transparency and accountability of legal and regulatory systems; and establishment of programs aimed at combating corruption, improving judicial processes, and promoting respect for human rights.

2005 Baseline: Qatar in danger of being downgraded to Tier 3 on the TIP Watch List; continued use of underage boys as camel jockeys; not all rights of expatriate laborers guaranteed-no right to strike or form labor unions; domestic workers not afforded the same rights as other workers and not included under the 2004 labor law; continued corruption in government procurement regime; Qatar acknowledges deficiencies in legal system but needs tools, expertise, assistance for new merged court system; judges need training

in other areas (commercial, international, etc.) as education was based on Sharia; new faculty of law needs advice on curriculum; not enough judges to deal with growing number of cases; no effective arbitration system (doesn't meet international standards); Qatar in process of founding law bar association.

Milestones:

- Increased participation of lawyers and judges in workshops on rule of law (CLDP, ISDLS)
- Prominent Qatari leaders participate in SMU Rule of Law Forum
- MOI officials participate in USDOJ anti-TIP program
- Lawyers and human rights advocate go to the U.S. on International Visitor Program
- Qatar enacts child camel jockey law banning the use of children as camel jockeys
- GOQ establishes camel jockey shelter
- Qatar amends its labor law granting expatriate laborers the right to strike and join labor unions and extending coverage to domestic workers

Tactics:

- Provide U.S. training to Qatari public defenders, prosecutors, and judges on legal reform to include areas such as transparency, procurement, customs, intellectual property laws and regulations, trade policy regulatory procedures and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (Three one-week workshops, \$90,000)
- Bring USDOJ officials to provide technical assistance to MOI officials regarding anti-TIP (\$195,000; post will seek cost-sharing)
- Transparency: Workshop for public sector audience (\$15,000)
- Encourage Qatar to adopt laws and practices to combat trafficking in persons and promote labor rights, thereby strengthening respect and adherence to human rights (no cost)

16. Resources: Total cost per year for these programs is \$626,000. An additional MEPI Locally Employed Staff will also be needed to administer the programs.

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